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ABSTRACT

The testimony presented covers the conception and implementation of an all-year-round schools program--the Valley View 45-15 Plan--under which plan, students attend school 45 days and are absent from school for 15 days on rotating shifts the year round. In the testimony, the characteristics of the Valley View District are described, the rationale for implementation of the 45-15 Plan is explained, and the Illinois State legislation required for implementation of the program is discussed. An evaluation is included that rates the Plan according to cost effectiveness; acceptance by students, teachers, and the community; and the level of student achievement. The testimony concludes with recommendations for action at national, State, and local school district levels that could enable the exploration and establishment of year-round school programs in other areas of the country. (Author/DN)

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TESTIMONY PRESENTED

TO

GENERAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, D.C.

24 April, 1972

by

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INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman, members of the Education Committee assembled.

The term "Year-Round School" has appeared in educational publications for the last 100 years. Just what exactly is "Year-Round School"? Before the turn of the century school systems in Chicago, New York, and other large metropolitan areas operated their schools in excess of 40 weeks a year. At the same time in the rural sectors of our country many one-room facilities were operating seven months a year. Somewhere along this time spectrum these two extremes merged to form what is more commonly called the traditional school year or the nine month school term.

Various attempts were made during the 1930's to re-structure the school calendar. Today, school districts who operated on either a voluntary or on a compulsory year-round school program in the 30's are now operating a traditional nine month program with educational opportunities being afforded to students for summer enrichment or make-up work.

Research has led us to believe that the two main reasons why compulsory year-round school programs failed in the past were administrative inability to handle the complicated scheduling problems and public non-support for calendar revision.

Today, April 24, 1972, the computer age is here. The scheduling procedures which out of necessity were tried by hand in the 1930's have now been automated, and rapid accurate facts are readily available.

The taxpayers are crying for accountability in education. Along with this, they are also questioning what George Jensen, Chairman of the National School Calendar Study Committee refers to as "The Fantastic Coffee Break" or The Three Month Summer Vacation. This does not mean to say that parents and other taxpayers are ready to endorse year-round school programs without being actively involved in the planning and development of such programs.

The success of the Valley View 45-15 Continuous School Year Plan must be credited to a harmony which existed during the developmental stages of the program. This harmony was the cooperation of various types of parent, business, and political

groups working together to assist a school district that in 1953 sprang out of cornfields in the northern sector of Illinois. These groups are as follows:

Our Will County Educational Service Region Office

Our State Office of Education

Our Office of the Governor

Our Illinois State Legislature

Our Illinois State Chamber of Commerce

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Regional Educational Office V, Chicago

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, Washington, D.C.

and

The Office of Congressman John Erlenborn

Today's on-going success of the Valley View 45-15 Continuous School Year Plan, though, must be credited to the acceptance that the Valley View Community has given to the program during the past twenty-two months of its operation.

But once again, what is a year-round school program? Is it a voluntary four-quarter plan that you will find in Atlanta, Georgia? Is it a voluntary-compulsory program that you will find

in Hayward, California? Is it a voluntary summer school plus a mandatory nine month program as you will find in New York City? Or is it the compulsory Valley View 45-15 Plan that you will find in Romeoville and Bolingbrook, Illinois? The answer to these questions is "yes". These are all year-round school programs.

I would like to share with you now, approximately four years of experiences pertaining to the conception, the pre-natal care, and the birth and the rearing of what Mr. Robert Beckwith, Chairman of the Education Department of the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce has called "a new chapter in the history of American Education, the Valley View 45-15 Plan".

What are the reasons behind the hundreds of school districts currently studying, operating, or getting ready to implement a year-round school program in the United States?

There are various reasons. (1) To improve learning by distributing learning activities over a 12 month school period. (2) To utilize the district's more up-to-date facilities more days of the year and to close down up to one-third of their out-dated facilities. (3) To bring about a more gradual and pain-less form of school integration. (4) To acquire the equivalent of up to one-third more educational facilities without laying the first brick.

VALLEY VIEW DISTRICT

Why did Valley View develop the 45-15 Plan? The taxpayers in our district had approved since 1953, twenty-one different educational issues for the increase of educational taxes. This demonstration of community support for public education resulted in the school district reaching the legal limit of its bonding power for school buildings in 1966.

It was almost inevitable that Valley View Schools of Will County, Illinois, would be the site of a major breakthrough in year-round education. In this semi-urban district are composed most of the problems that have beset soaring suburban districts since the end of World War II.

Valley View District lies on high, but gently rolling, rich farm land in the northwestern corner of Will County in Illinois. The forty square mile area of the district is bisected diagonally by Interstate Highway I-55, the main traffic artery between Chicago and St. Louis. Interstate 55 replaces the long crumbling U.S. 66, Sante Fe Trail made famous in John Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath. Downtown Chicago lies thirty miles or 45 minutes to the northeast by I-55, known as Adlai Stevenson Expressway within the city.

The historic town of Joliet, named for Father Louis Joliet, the French Jesuit Explorer, lies ten miles to the south of the heart of the district. The district gets its name, Valley View, from the fact that it is located on high ground overlooking the Des Plaines River and the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, main arteries in the Great Lakes to the Gulf Waterways, one of the world's busiest channels.

The Des Plaines River gives the Valley View District one of its few industries, the large limestone quarry of the General Dynamics Corporation, which furnished much of the crushed stone for the building of the Southwestern Railroad and for the highways of Illinois. The river also supplies Illinois soft coal and cooling water for the huge steam power generating plant of the Commonwealth Edison Company, which accounts for approximately 32% of the estimated assessed evaluation of the Valley View District. The district is laced with high tension lines carrying power to Chicago and northeastern Illinois.

Just outside of the district and contributing nothing to the building bond tax revenues are the large Argonne National Laboratories, operated by the University of Chicago for the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission; a large oil refinery, which receives its crude petroleum in barges along the Illinois-Mississippi Waterway; and the immense Stateville Penitentary built as a model prison in the early 1920's to augment the famous Joliet Penitentary.

Many of the present residents of the Valley View District work in these facilities lying outside of the district. Others work in large tractor and farm equipment plants in the southwestern suburbs of Chicago and in Joliet, which is also a center for producing steel and wire and fencing. About 10% of the workers living in the District are employed by the many interstate and regional trucking firms whose depots are located strategicllv south and west of the City of Chicago.

Until a year ago Valley View District contained no major shopping center. There were small neighborhood food marts in both Romeoville and Bolingbrook, the two incorporated communities within the district. Residents turned to Joliet or to the Oak Brook Shopping Center approximately fifteen miles away for their principal shopping. Accordingly, there was almost no sales tax revenue to support municipal functions within the district.

Valley View School District was formed in the summer of 1953 by combining four one-room country schools into a single consolidated district. The total number of students registered in the first year was 89, which compares with more than 7,800 during this current school year. There were five teachers; two are still employed in the district. The 1971-72 Professional Staff of the district totals 288.

The agrarian school trustees who organized Valley View District gladly gave up their seats on the combined board to make possible the initiation of a general science program at the seventh and eighth grade level. They were concerned primarily with up-grading the educational offerings for the children - a concern that is still uppermost in the minds of the heterogeneous board.

Our district coasted comfortably, insofar as expansion was concerned, until the fall of 1959. The official average daily attendance for the 1958-59 school year was 219. The district's assessed valuation had grown 55 million, thanks to the construction of Commonwealth Edison Power Plant, and there was a comfortable $254,359.00 assessed property evaluation to support each student.

But, then came the avalanche. The elementary school population jumped 260% to 542 pupils as the first immigrants from Chicago began to fill up the Hampton Park Subdivision in Romeoville. This prefabricated housing project was developed by Alexander Construction Company, largest dealers for the nations' largest manufactuer of pre-assembled, panelized houses, National Homes Corporation of Lafayette, Indiana.

The Village of Romeoville, headquarters of our school district, had enjoyed a comfortable, rural population of 400 in the 1950 census. With the impact of Alexander's rows of pre-fabricated houses, the village was destined to go to 3,574 in the 1960 census; 6,358 in a special census taken in the mid-sixties; and to nearly 9,000 in the 1970 census.

Lagging only slightly behind was the new Village of Bolingbrook, at the intersection of I-55 with Illinois 53, which had jumped to a population of 5,357 in a special census in the mid-sixties and a population of nearly 8,000 in the 1970 census.

The financial plight of our district was compounded continually. Thanks to the arrival of the Commonwealth Edison Plant on the tax rolls, the assessed valuation per pupil had reached a peak of $261,475.00 in 1957-58, the year before construction began to boom in the Village of Romeoville. By 1966-67 the assessed value per pupil had dropped to $20,926.00 and by the fall of 1970 to $17,553.00 per pupil, just one-fifteenth of the peak valuation in 1957-58.

Schools in Illinois are supported approximately two-thirds from taxes from real and personal property and one-third from state aid. The school population of our district is affected by another fact. Approximately two-thirds of the residents of

the district are Roman Catholics - largely of Italian, Polish, and Irish decent - workers who have moved from their homes on the west, southwest, and south sides of Chicago when the Black population increased there. Only a fraction of the children from these families attend Catholic Parochial Schools -- approximately 500.

Home building lagged during the two years preceeding the 1970 school year in our district, due to the high cost of construction and the high interest rate. This had a temporary effect of sending the district approximately 10% fewer students that had been estimated in the school administration projections for the 1970-71 school year.

However, the end is nowhere near in sight. In the Village of Bolingbrook alone there are currently twenty-one various sub-dividers constructing single family dwellings, quadro-plexes and various other types of condominiums ranging in price from $19,000 to $45,000. Conservative estimates given the district by the various sub-dividers in Bolingbrook indicates that the total pace of well over 3200 new homes will be constructed during the calendar year of 1972. When the land the developers now own is fully developed, it is reasonable to expect that the Valley View School District will have to provide a kindergarten through twelfth grade education for approximately 32,000 children by the time the next decennial census (in 1980) comes around.

Although the majority of the voters and taxpayers in our district are blue collar workers (truckers and factory employees), they have historically supported the district to the greatest possible degree. They have voted continual increases in the educational tax rate and in the bond issues for new schools. Since implementing the 45-15 Plan, the voters have continued their support for the schools at referendum time. On August 15, 1970, they approved a higher building fund rate and a 2.6 million dollar bond issue. The legal authority for bringing about this vote was due to the fact that the Valley View District qualified for an interest-free loan from the Illinois School Building Commission.

Once again on August 28, 1971 the voters returned to the polls to vote in (by a margin of two to one) the 8.2 million dollar bond referenda for a new high school and for the remodeling of an old high school and for an additional 53¢ educational tax rate. The positive passage of the 53¢ educational tax rate proved to be the largest increase voted on in the history of the State of Illinois. The passage of the August 1970 and August 1971 bond referenda was with the understanding that the additional facilities would operate under the Valley View 45-15 Continuous School Year Plan.

In 1966 Valley View knew that in 1970, it would be faced with implementing some different form of educational pattern for the children of the district. There were three choices that the Board of Education could consider. (1) Pack the classroom to overcapacity which would call for sixty to seventy students per teaching station; this was ridiculous. (2) The customary escape that the public gives to overcrowding situations when buildings cannot be obtained would be half-day sessions. The Board of Education did not wish to sacrifice the present quality of their on-going educational program by going on half-day sessions. (3) The third alternative was to develop a program that would better utilize the taxpayer investment in school buildings, materials, and capital outlay equipment for more days of the year.

Subsequently, in August of 1968, the Board of Education of the Valley View District directed the school administration to begin procedures on updating the school calendar. The Board directed that an educationally sound and fiscally sound program be developed for Valley View Schools and implemented no later than the 1970-71 school year.

The crisis of the Valley View District was facing for 1970 included a phenomenal growth within the boundaries of the VAlley View District and a requirement of state statutes that elementary districts or other districts that provides elementary educational services be required to also offer a kindergarten program.

Research findings indicated that commencing with the 1970-71 school year, the Valley View Schools would need the equivalent of two thirty-room buildings. The Board of Education charge to the district administration called for obtaining these two thirty-room buildings by up-dating the school calendar. The Valley View 45-15 Continuous School Year Calendar was developed. In order to completely understand how the 45-15 Plan works, we must take a moment to look at the school calendar itself.

THE 45-15 PLAN

The calendar, while looking confusing at first, is surprisingly simple. The figures "45-15" form the heart of the plan. Every one of our youngsters go to school for 45 class days and then has a 15 class day vacation all year long but in rotating shifts.

On June 30, 1970, our entire school district, composed of about 7,000 pupils in five elementary schools and one junior high school, was divided into four groups. Three groups were in class while the fourth group was on vacation. Thus, about 5,250 pupils attend school without overtaxing the facilities and 1,750 stay home.

As I mentioned before, Valley View started the program on June 30, 1970. We started by sending group A to class. Fifteen class days later, group B started. After another 15 days, group C began. When the next 15 class day period ended, (August 31) group A pupils went on vacation, and group D pupils took their place. After another 15 class days group B went home, and group A pupils started up again. And so it has gone throughout the year and into the current 1971-72 year.

Weekends, holidays, and the traditional Christmas and Easter vacations are enjoyed by all students at the same time. In addition, all pupils receive approximately one and one-half weeks off during the latter part of June and the first part of July, so that maintenance work can be done on the school and buses.

All children from the same family stay in the same group. The Valley View Scheduling Pattern also calls for neighborhoods to be preserved. Parents receive a 15 class day vacation in each season of the year - summer, winter, spring, and fall - a week at Christmas, a week at Easter, and a week and one-half in the summer. Children still attend school for 180 days per school year.

Instantly, upon implementation of the 45-15 Program, Valley View District increased its building capacity by one-third. This was equal to adding two thirty-room schools at an estimated cost of six million dollars which also includes debt retirement. This was accomplished without laying the first brick.

LEGISLATION

At its conception, the Valley View 45-15 Continuous School Year Plan faced two major problems: (1) The scheduling calendar was illegal in the State of Illinois. (2) School systems in Illinois received state aid through an average daily attendance formula.

You can readily see that the 45-15 Plan required that one-fourth of the children be out of school year-round. It would not be possible for Valley View to operate its public school system with a reduction of a one-fourth in state aid. Consequently, two legislative bills were introduced into the 76th General Assembly. The first bill, House Bill 529 would provide that a school district could operate under a year-round school design if the board of education resolved that the district operate under such a program and that the State Superintendent of Public Instruction granted his approval. House Bill 529 was passed by the 76th General Assembly but later was vetoed by the Governor. The Governor's reasoning behind this veto was due to the fact that an entire school district would be required to operate a year-round school program, rather than being able to choose one, two, three, or more pilot schools within the confines of the district.

Consequently, an additional bill, Senate Bill 1438, was introduced into the adjourned session of the 76th General Assembly. This bill was very similar to House Bill 529 with the exception that a school district or attendance centers within a school district could operate under an approved year-round school program. On June 29, 1970 one day before Valley View

was to commence its illegal program, Governor Richard B. Ogilvie, came to Valley View District to sign into law Senate Bill 1438.

To correct the state aid problem, House Bill 1525 was introduced into the 76th General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Ogilvie on August 18, 1969. This bill provided that if any school would operate on an approved year-round school program, it would receive its appropriate share of state aid as if it were operating under a traditional school year program. The decision-making power in providing the state aid financing for an approved year-round school program was left with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

I feel it is well to point out that in the State of Illinois, the General Assembly has taken appropriate action so that school districts can operate under their chosen type of year-round school program. That flexibiltiy for instituting various types of programs is legal within the State of Illinois. No school district is required to operate under a year-round school program, but the decision-making power is initially vested with the local educational agencies.

Today, we find many school systems throughout the United States not as fortunate as those within the State of Illinois. As an example, in the State of Texas, a particular form of year-round school programs is now required by state statute. This requirement is to take effect in the very near future. In the State of New York, permissive year-round school legislation has constantly been defeated in their General Assembly.

Many districts wish to study and to implement a year-round school program. Consequently in the current session of the General Assembly in the State of Illinois, year-round school legislation will be introduced to provide funds for the study of year-round school programs by individual school districts. I feel that it is wise that a limitation of funds has been included within this legislation.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

The professional staff of the Valley View Schools was given an opportunity to select various types of contractual offerings under the 45-15 Plan. By state statute, no teacher can be required to teach more than 185 days within a school term. But teachers may be afforded an opportunity to work more than 185 days. In order to determine a salary schedule for the 45-15

Program, a traditional 1969-70 salary schedule was divided by 184 days to arrive at a per diem pay rate. At this point, negotiations were begun to establish what a per diem pay rate would be for the 1970-71 school year, the first year of 45-15 operation. For the first year of operation 61.9% of the Valley View staff chose to work more than a traditional 184 days. (The maximum number of days would be 244 days.) On the second year of operation, the minimum teacher contracts would call for 180 days or the teachers could choose to work up to 240 days.

I feel that it must be pointed out at this time, that for a matter of years, taxpayers have been bemoaning the fact that teachers should receive a living wage for a twelve month period, but at the same time, teachers should be working a full year. On the other hand, teachers while trying to negotiate a living wage for a twelve month period, have countered with the fact that there is usually no opportunity for work for an entire twelve month period. Who has been locking the teachers out? Under a year-round school program, teachers now have an opportunity to work for a twelve month period with approximately one month of vacation.

What does this do to a teacher's salary schedule? As an example; Our present salary schedule for the 1971-72 school year calls for a beginning teacher with a Bachelor's Degree starting at $7,750 for 180 days work, or if he so choose, $10,334.40 for a full year's work, 240 days. At the top of our salary schedule it would call for 180 day salary of $14,652 as compared with a full year salary for 240 days work of $19,536. I now ask the question; are we competing with business and industry?

EVALUATION

The Valley View 45-15 Continuous School Year Plan has undergone constant evaluation through the assistance of the State Department of Education, State of Illinois, and the U.S. Office of Education, Washington, D.C..

Community

In April of 1971, based on a re-interview of 10% of the families in the district (originally interviewed just prior to the enrollment of their children), the following conclusions seemed warranted. (1) A small percentage of families who were originally the most negative towards the school system and the

45-15 Plan are still negative. (2) All other families remain as positive or are more positive towards the 45-15 Plan than a year ago. (3) Only one specific complaint was lodged by several parents that seemed directly tied to the 45-15 Plan. Some parents of small children said that the 15 day vacation that occurred during the coldest part of the winter required mothers to keep their children inside more with consequent irritation to mothers. (4) In contrast, several specific advantages were cited such as spreading the vacation period throughout the year, the opportunity of visiting parks and museums at less crowded times than is customary in the summer, time for winter sports, and elimination of long periods of student boredom and irresponsible vacation behavior. (5) Most families said they made no changes in budget for food, clothing, baby-sitting, and spending money. A few families said less spending was required. However, those that said that the costs were higher did not cite the actual expense but seemed to be using it as another means to express negative feelings about the plan or the school system. (6) Families sometimes reported that they personally knew of a family that had moved out of the district because of the 45-15 Plan.

Professional Staff

In April of 1970, two months before Valley View District commenced the 45-15 Program, the professional staff was given a long questionnaire in which they could react to various features of the 45-15 Plan. Most of the teachers were mildly or strongly in support of the program. Many of the small number who were opposed also said that they would not be returning.

Their opinions on many specific outcomes of the Plan were varied and were often conflicting, thus, many teachers thought the cost per child would increase for administration, maintenance, and instructional materials. This is contrary both to the opinion of administrators and the preliminary cost analysis. However, most teachers thought children would learn as much or more under the 45-15 Plan.

The feature that the teachers overwhelmingly liked was the selection of contracts of various lengths. Most of those who wanted to work "full time" were given such contracts.

Re-survey results to date indicate that the Valley View faculty are more positive after a year and one half experience than they were before starting the Plan. However, they are also more discriminating among their specific reactions.

An opinionaire survey conducted among the primary staff in December of 1970 indicated that overwhelmingly the staff felt that very little re-teaching was required after a 15 class day vacation.

Students

Thus far students attitude has remained unchanged since the 45-15 Program was implemented. Students who liked school before the 45-15 Plan like school today. Those students who did not like school before the 45-15 Plan do not like school today.

Costs

A preliminary analysis showed that Valley View District initially would save at least 2% on total educational cost per child and eventually save 4%. A peculiarity of the financial problems of the district (assessed valuation has decreased from $240,000 per child to less than $20,000) is that little will be saved now on new construction because the district can not spend more money even if the taxpayers want too, as the legal limit had been reached for indebtedness. Instead, without the 45-15 Plan, the district would have been on double shifts twenty-two months ago. However,if the district is to remain on the 45-15 Program after construction needs are met, then the savings could increase to 4% or so.

Aside from reduced debt retirement, savings can be made in better use of equipment, reduced administrative costs, and extended use of instructional materials. In the short run, salary costs could go up, if most teachers chose to work under a 240 day contract and these teachers are more experienced and thereby higher on the salary schedule. In the long run, especially if more schools move towards year-round operation, then the costs might go down because teacher groups might make less stringent salary demands with the higher income possible with a twelve working month contract.

Student Achievement

The first rigorous post-test achievement testing of pupils in Valley View District has been completed, but at the present time, no in-depth study has been concluded. The pre-test results showed that no significant difference among the four attendance groups but showed important differences between some schools at certain grade levels. These differences were largely accounted for by differences in ability tests results and achievement levels when moving into the district. Achievement level is significantly lower for those students whose families recently moved into our district. Preliminary findings lead us to believe that at this point in time, there has been no significant change in students' achievements operating under the 45-15 Plan.

Once again subjective reports by most teachers are that pupils are doing better school work with four short vacations rather than one long summer vacation.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Valley View District launched a community and public information program before actually implementation of the 45-15 Program. The administrators of our district began talking to the public intensively in October, 1968. The first group of students was scheduled to enter the 45-15 Program on June 30, 1970. I wish to impress at this time that at least as much lead time as is necessary should be considered in order to work out the technicalities of scheduling, school census, air-conditioning, curriculum modifications, and teacher negotiations. It is recognized that the size of a school district wishing to implement a program would also dictate the amount of lead time that would be needed.

In Valley View's case the program was set up on an entire school district basis in Kindergarten thorugh Grade 8. The problems mentioned above were in addition to passing, in two sessions of the legislature, needed changes in the Illinois School Code. It is now expected that other districts -- certainly in Illinois -- would not require that much time in the future if lessons from Valley View are heeded.

The public must be taken into the confidence of the Board of Education, because it is neither practical nor moral to carry out extensive plans behind doors. In Illinois the element of illegality of closed meetings comes under the Scariano "Open Meetings" Act. Information is bound to leak out, and then it will tend to be distorted and to be misunderstood. For Valley View it was just plain common sense to keep the community informed constantly and completely and to insure full coverage of every decision in newspaper reports of Board of Education meetings.

Escentially, the Valley View information campaign was similiar in many respects to campaigns conducted by other school boards to "sell the public" on tax rate increases or authorization to issue bonds to finance school construction.

The Valley View campaign was "different" in two important essentials: (1) There was no formal or continuing "citizens" advisory committee. The district's Board of Education and administration believed then, and still believes, that the imposition of such an additional "super board" on top of a complex, major change in operations would merely complicate the job of maintaining community confidence. (2) Instead, reliance was placed mainly on person to person contact by a small team, composed of the Superintendent of Schools and one or more assistants and officials or members of the Board of Education.

This does not mean that our school missed any opportunity to present our 45-15 Story to any group, of any size, at any time. Our district is one of those fortunate school districts in which the community is interested and sends representatives to attend school board meetings regularly. At every meeting, the President makes a point of asking members of the audience to make suggestions or to arrange meetings with groups of any type or size.

Our neighborhood meetings were literally "coffee klatches". Parents wishing to host a meeting would call the District Office. A team of administrators and board members would call on the afternoon or morning "hostess" carrying with them an electric coffee maker, disposable cups, and a selection of doughnuts or sweetrolls all paid for by the school district. At these meetings the questions were informal. The discussions would range over every aspect of our school system and its operations and virtually every facet of education. Here the "gripes" and "worries" of individual parents over their children would come out in the open, giving the school administration a valuable opportunity to get constant "feedback" on the conduct of the schools.

This technique has been followed by the district and the Board of Education for years, and has been a major contributing factor to the success in securing public endorsement for the referendums since 1953. A big help in these meetings was the four color calendar that you have in front of you. This calendar though was enlarged to form a 34' long accordion display that was also used in presentation at large meetings. With this chart, every parent could tell at a glance on what days the schools were to be closed, and on what days each 45 class day learning session would begin and end.

Four color charts was only one of the many tools that were employed to present the 45-15 Program graphically to the community. There were also sets of overhead transpariencies, which presented the financial and housing plight of the school district. There was also an audio visual presentation, consisting of a series of slides and a tape recorded narration. This slide-tape presentation was used especially for formal meetings, such as service clubs and PTO's. It has to date turned out to be extremely useful to the hundreds of school administrators, board members, and parents who have visited Valley View Schools since 45-15 began.

The local community newspapers in Romeoville, Bolingbrook, Joliet, Lockport, Naperville, and Chicago have been of extreme value in keeping the parents of our district informed as to the plan as it proceeded.

An interesting side light on the public relations program is our use of "Dial-Into-Education". Each week an up-to-date report about the happenings in the school system is recorded on a two minute tape. Parents are reminded constantly through the newspapers, flyers, and the school's lunch schedule to Dial-Into-Education, 838-0699, for information about their schools and about the 45-15 Plan. Other school systems have been so impressed with this facet of communication that they also have taken the steps to include this type of dissemination activity in their own community.

Unit District

Effective July 1, 1971, a new high school district, Valley View High School District #211, was formed. Up until July 1, 1971, our Valley View Elementary District was one of many feeder districts which fed into Lockport Township High School District #205. The voters of Valley View felt that in order to up-grade the quality of education their children had been receiving in the years past, it would be necessary to split away from High School District #205 and form a new district.

One of the first decisions that the new Board of Education made was to call for Valley View High School District #211 to commence the 45-15 Program in the summer of 1972.

In addition, the Boards of Education of the elementary district and of the high school district united to bring about the formation of a unit school district encompassing grades K-12. On May 20, 1972, the Unit District election will be held; pending the approval of this unit district a new unit district is to be formed July 1, 1972. At that time all children in grades K-12 will attend school under the Valley View 45-15 Continuous School Year Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I would recommend that each state: (1) Take appropriate action to provide enabling legislation and/or policy permitting flexibility of programing so that various patterns of year-round education may be explored at the local level. (2) Take appropriate action to provide state school aid on a pro-rated basis for extended school programs. (3) Encourage operational experimental or exploratory programs for year-round education through financial incentive or grants.

I recommend that at the local level, local school systems: (1) Consider ways, including year-round education, in which the educational program can be improved in terms of (a) providing a quality education with equality in the educational opportunity, (b) adapting to the community and family living patterns and, (c) attaining optimum economic efficiency. (2) Conduct on-going public relations programs including information about how a year-round education program would affect teachers, parents, students, and other groups, and provide the public with adequate information about any proposed plan before it is adopted as a mandatory change. (3) Carefully assessed the adequacy of the financial resources and current school facilities, including a careful analysis of comparative budgets, before adopting a new schedule. (4) Select and assign staff which will be both effective in terms of the school program and fair and equitable in terms of the demands placed on the staff. (5) carefully develop budgets that will adequately provide for initiating and operating the proposed program and which will assess adequacies of school facilities before adopting a new schedule. This includes payment to teachers on a pro-rated bas for additional time worked. (6) Provide, in the initial planning, for the institutionalization of the program if it meets expectations. (Do not accept state, federal, or other grant monies to initiate such a program unless the intent is to adopt it as a regular school schedule, if it proves successful and acceptable.)

I recommend that the U.S. Office of Education: (1) Encourage experimentation in year-round education. (2) Rigorously examine all year-round education models which seem to be widely acceptable in terms of well defined, established criteria. (3) Foster the adoption of these plans or models which have demonstrated the value and acceptability so that nation-wide patterns may emerge that are compatiable with each other.

CONCLUSION

I feel that it is well to recognize that the standard 180 day school year as it now prevails in most schools is not universally satisfactory; nor has any operating program for year-round schools yet proved to be universally acceptable. I also feel that it should be recognized that a plan which may be appropriate in one community situation, may not be acceptable to another situation, and that the extended programs which seem to have been most acceptable are those which proved flexibility or optimal attendance. We must recognize that every individual is unique, and if each is to learn what he needs to know at his own best rate, a school curriculum must be individualized. I feel that time schedules of individuals and families are continuing to become more diverse and that a student's time in the school must be adaptable to this changing situation. I must point out emphatically, that financial resources of any community, all

states and the nation are limited, and these financial resources must be allocated on a priority basis. Educational programs, including the school calendar, must be designed to obtain optimum economic efficiency.